

April 25th, 2012

WASHINGTON- Full Committee Ranking Member Rep. Norm Dicks gave the following statement during committee consideration of House Republican subcommittee 302(b) allocations for FY2013:

"Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the 302(b)s because what is before us allocates only \$1.028 trillion, not \$1.047 trillion. We all know, at the end of the day, \$1.047 is the FY 2013 discretionary allocation. A majority of the House Republican conference voted for \$1.047 in adopting the Budget Control Act. I am outraged Republicans, at least for now, have reneged on that agreement. Finding the right balance for discretionary spending – between the need for austerity and the need to invest to grow the economy – was not easy; in fact, it was considered a major accomplishment. At the time, we thought we had a leg up on the appropriation bills for this year because the Act settled the issue of our allocation.

"Instead, Republicans have introduced uncertainty about the FY 2013 allocation and that will, of course, hamper the appropriation process. The House and Senate cannot resolve our differences on each bill without an agreement on total allocation and on subcommittee allocations. The President will not, and should not, sign any appropriation bills unless it is clear how they fit within an overall budget plan. By re-litigating a settled issue, Republicans slow the process down. Other actors put up plenty of obstacles to hamper the appropriations process; as appropriators, we don't need to place any additional stumbling blocks in our own way.

"This allocation puts House Republicans at odds with Senate Republicans, Senate Democrats, the White House, as well as House Democrats. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell voted for 302(b)s at \$1.047 and Ranking Member Thad Cochran noted:

It is appropriate in my view for the Committee to proceed on the basis of the discretionary caps enacted into law less than nine months ago.□ Seventy-four Senators did support it including a majority of the Members of both parties in the Senate and a majority of Members on both sides of the Committee... it is certainly reasonable for us to proceed consistent with the law.

"The White House objection is made clear in the April 18th letter from Acting OMB Director Jeff Zients that is in front of all Members. He states the President will not sign any appropriation bills until the allocation that was settled in the Budget Control Act is agreed to once again. He doesn't say anything we didn't already know but it serves a purpose to clearly articulate that point.

"The Democratic objection to re-litigating \$1.047 is substantive as well as procedural. Our economy has just begun to show signs of recovery. To introduce uncertainty about discretionary spending, and about whether Representatives in the House will make another effort to shut down the government, will not help. Moreover, the effort to choke off even more discretionary spending will clearly stall economic growth and impede job creation.

"I urge all my colleagues to vote NO on the 302(b)s before us and I ask my friends on the other side to stick to the deal that is established in law."